

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the latest Official Action, pending Claims 1-3 and 5-14 were rejected under Sections 102(e) or 103 of the Patent Statute, with the Examiner relying principally upon the prior U.S. Patent to Braun et al., No. 6,183,018. The present applicant is entitled to a priority date which antedates the earliest effective reference date of Braun et al., and thus the rejection should be withdrawn.

The Braun et al. patent issued from an international application filed November 26, 1996 (i.e. before November 29, 2000), and as such the patent can be used as prior art only under the provisions of § 102(e) in effect before November 29, 2000. Under the provisions then in effect, the § 102 (e) date of the Braun et al. patent is the date of compliance with § 371(c) (1), (2) and (4), which is indicated on the cover sheet of the patent to be September 21, 1998. Note Section 706.02(f)(1) – Example 6, of the MPEP.

The Braun et al. patent might also be used as prior art under the provisions of § 102(a) or (b), as of the publication date of the international application, which is June 5, 1997.

From the above, it will be seen that the earliest prior art date of the Braun et al. patent is June 5, 1997. However, this date is after the priority date of the present application provided by Swiss priority application 1150/97, which was filed on May 16, 1997.

In accordance with the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 119, 37 C.F.R. 1.55, and Section 201.15 of the MPEP, a proper claim of priority was set forth in the Declaration of the subject application. Also, a certified copy of the priority application was filed in parent application 09/078,914. Further, an English translation of the priority application is attached to this Response (Appendix A), and it is hereby stated that the translation is accurate. It will be apparent that the priority document provides full support for the invention now being claimed.

For the reasons set forth above, it is submitted that the rejections based upon the

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Braun et al. patent cannot be sustained, and it is requested that the rejections be withdrawn and that the application be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

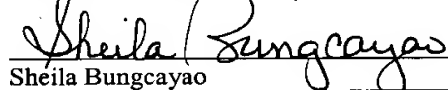


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APPENDIX A

Translation of Priority Application No. 1150/97 filed in Switzerland on May 16, 1997

Method of, and apparatus for, providing text on printed products

The present invention relates to a method of providing text on printed products according to the preamble of claim 1 and to apparatuses according to claims 10 and implementing the method.

EP-A-0 096 228 and the corresponding US Patent No. 4,538,161 disclose an arrangement for addressing newspapers, periodicals and similar printed products. The arrangement has a conveying means which is designed as a unit conveyor and has clamps which are arranged at intervals one behind the other and each grip a printed product. The conveying means guides the printed products past a stationary ink jet recorder. A control means has a clock generator which is driven by the unit conveyor and emits a control signal for each clamp. The control signal triggers in each case one recording operation of the recorder when a printed product passes through the recording region of the recorder.

A method of, and an arrangement for, providing text on printed products is known from EP-A-0 709 218. A conveying means moves the printed products, which overlap one another in an imbricated manner, past a first recording station in the conveying direction. Said recording station applies text to that outer side of the printed products which is directed towards it, in a text panel which is arranged in the border region which is exposed by the imbricated overlap. Before the printed products are guided past a second recording station, a border region of the second outer side of the printed products is exposed, for example by being turned over. The second recording station then provides text on printed products in a further text panel in the border region of the second outer side.

A method of, and an apparatus for, providing text on an inner side of folded printed products is disclosed in EP-A-0 709 326 and in a corresponding US Patent No. 5,596,932. The printed products are transported with their fold, which runs approximately at right angles to the conveying direction, retained by means of clamps. An opening device moves the front and rear halves of the respective folded printed products apart from one another, with the result that a printing head can carry out the desired text-applying operation on the inner side of the folded printed product.

These known methods and apparatuses are suitable, in particular, for providing text on printed products in a border region which does not contain any printing. If the text or parts

thereof comes/come to be located in the printed region of the printed products, this can result in problems as far as the clarity and legibility of the information are concerned.

It is thus an object of the present invention to develop the method of the generic type such that the information which is to be applied to the printed products can be seen and read easily in all circumstances. It is also an object of the present invention to provide apparatuses which are particularly suitable for implementing the method according to the invention.

This object is achieved by a method according to claim 1.

According to the invention, there is applied to the printed surface of the printed products a contrast panel, which forms a text panel and forms a contrast with respect to the information which is to be applied. This ensures that the information always appears in contrast with respect to its surroundings and can thus be seen and read easily.

The method according to the invention is suitable, in particular, for providing text on printed products which are produced by means of gravure printing. In the case of these printed products, the printed information often extends right up to the border of the printed sheets. The application of a contrast panel, which forms the text panel, allows the information to be seen and read easily, even when the printed information is of the same color as the text or is of a color which does not form much of a contrast with respect to the text.

A particularly preferred embodiment of the method according to the invention is specified in claim 2. A partially transparent text panel, on the one hand, forms a good contrast with respect to the information and, on the other hand, allows the printed information of the printed product to be seen and read when the text panel overlaps the printed information.

Further preferred embodiments of the method according to the invention are specified in the further dependent claims.

Particularly preferred embodiments of apparatuses for implementing the method according to the invention are defined in claims 10 to 12.

The present invention will now be explained in more detail with reference to exemplary embodiments illustrated in the drawing, in which, purely schematically:

Figure 1 shows, on the left, part of a printed product to which, in a first step, two light-colored contrast panels have been applied and, on the right, the same part of the printed product, which, in a second step, has been provided with dark text in the contrast panels;

Figure 2 shows, in the same illustration as Figure 1, the printed-product parts, on the left, with a partially transparent contrast panel applied and, on the right, with dark text in the contrast panel, the contrast panel and the text running in the conveying direction of the printed product;

Figure 3 shows the printed-product part, on the left, with a partially transparent contrast panel applied and, on the right, with dark text in the contrast panel, the contrast panel and the text running transversely with respect to the conveying direction;

Figure 4 shows, in the same illustration as Figure 1, the printed product, on the left, with a contrast panel applied using dark ink and, on the right, with text applied in the contrast panel using light-colored ink;

Figure 5 shows part of the printed product with a contrast panel applied using dark ink, the characters which form the text having been left blank as the contrast panel was produced;

Figure 6 shows a perspective illustration of an apparatus having a conveying means designed-as a belt conveyor, and having two printing stations for applying a contrast panel to the printed products and for providing text on the printed products in the contrast panel;

Figure 7 shows a view of an apparatus with a conveying means which is designed as a clamp-type transporter and is intended for transporting the printed products, and having two printing stations for applying a contrast panel to the printed products and for applying text to the contrast panel; and

Figure 8 shows a view of an apparatus having a conveying means which is designed as a clamp-type transporter and is intended for transporting the printed products, and having a labeling device for producing and adhesively bonding partially transparent labels, which form a contrast panel and are provided with text at a recording station.

Figure 1 shows a corner region of a printed product 10 which is transported continuously in the conveying direction F, said printed product being shown, on the left, after a first step and, on the right, after a second step for providing it with text. As is illustrated on the left of Figure 1, a surface 10'' of the printed product 10, said surface being printed with printed information 10', has been provided, in the first step, with two contrast panels 14, which form a text panel 12. The text panels 12, which are arranged one beside the other, are of rectangular shape, the longer sides running in the conveying direction F. The printed product 10 is printed right up to its borders 16, 16', the printed information 10' in the region

of the text panels 12 being covered over by the contrast panel 14, which has been printed on using light-colored, preferably white, ink.

In a second step, the text panels 12 have been provided with information 18', in the present example with an address. The information 18' is printed onto the white contrast panel 14 using dark, preferably black, ink, see the printed product 10 illustrated on the right in Figure 1. The contrast panel 14 forms a contrast with respect to the text 18, with the result that the latter can be immediately seen and read easily. Moreover, the text panel 12 forms a contrast with respect to the printed information of the printed product.

The printed product 10 which is shown on the left in Figure 2 has been provided with a partially transparent contrast panel 14, which forms the text panel 12. The printed information 10' can also be seen in the contrast panel 14. It has proven particularly advantageous to print using partially transparent white ink; the latter has a milky white appearance and the printed information 10' can easily be seen through it. The printed product 10 which is shown on the right of Figure 2 is provided, in the partially transparent contrast panel 14, with the information 18', which forms the text 18, using dark, preferably black, ink. Tests have shown that, even on printed products 10 which have been printed using black ink and have a partially transparent light-colored contrast panel, black text 18 can be read easily without the printed information 10' being obliterated. In the case of the example shown in Figure 2, the contrast panel 14 is likewise rectangular, and the longer sides likewise run in the conveying direction F.

Figure 3 shows, on the left, the corner region of the printed product 10 with a printed-on contrast panel 14 which is likewise partially transparent and, on the right, the printed product 10 with black text 18 in the partially transparent contrast panel 14, analogously to Figure 2. In Figure 3, the rectangular contrast panel 14 is arranged such that its longer sides run at right angles to the conveying direction F.

Figure 4 shows, on the left, the printed product 10 with a dark, preferably black, contrast panel 14 applied in the first step. As Figure 4 shows on the right, the information 18', which forms the text 18, has then been printed onto the printed product 10 in the contrast panel 14, in the second step, using light-colored, preferably white, ink.

In the case of the printed product 10 which is shown in Figure 5, the contrast panel 14, which forms the text panel 12, and the text 18 have been produced in a single step. The characters 20 which form the information 18' were left blank as the contrast panel 14 was applied. Here too, the contrast panel 14 forms a contrast with respect to the printed information 10' in the region of the contrast panel 14.

Figure 6 shows a perspective illustration of a first embodiment of an apparatus 22 for the inventive operation of providing text on the printed products 10 according to Figures 1 to 5. The apparatus has a conveying means 24 with a belt conveyor 26 which is driven so as to circulate continuously in the conveying direction F. The multi-part, folded printed products 10, for example newspapers, periodicals or the like, are spaced apart from one another on the belt conveyor 26. Two printing stations 28, 30 are arranged above the belt conveyor 26 and spaced apart from one another in the conveying direction F. The first printing station 28, as seen in the conveying direction F, is intended for printing a contrast panel 14 onto a corner region of the printed surface 10" of each printed product 10 which is moved past it. The second printing station 30, which is arranged downstream of the first printing station 28, is intended for printing the printed-product-specific information 18', for example an address, a number, a bar code or the like, into the contrast panel 14 of the printed products 10 which are moved past it. Of course, the colors of the inks applied by means of the first printing station 28 and by means of the second printing station 30 form a contrast.

If the printed products 10 are to be provided with text according to Figure 5, either one of the two printing stations 28, 30 is brought to a standstill or the apparatus 22 has only one printing station 28.

The apparatus 22 which is shown in Figure 7 has a conveying means 24 which is designed as a clamp-type transporter 32. Arranged on a drawing member 34, which is driven continuously in the conveying direction F, are clamps 36, which are spaced apart one behind the other and can be controlled individually and are intended for retaining in each case one printed product 10. The printed products 10 rest against one another such that they overlap one another partially, forming an imbricated formation S in the process. Each of the printed products 10 thus has, on the side which is directed away from the drawing member 34, an exposed border region 38, which is not covered over by an adjacent printed product 10. Arranged opposite the drawing member 34, in relation to the movement path of the printed products 10, are two printing stations 28, 30, which are spaced apart from one another, as seen in the conveying direction F. The first printing station 28, as seen in the conveying direction F, is intended for printing a contrast panel 14, which forms the text panel 12, onto the border region 38 of the printed products 10 which are moved past it by means of the clamp-type transporter 32. The second printing station 30, which is arranged downstream of the first printing station 28, is intended for printing into the respective contrast panel 14 the information 18' which is assigned to the printed product 10.

The apparatus 22 which is shown in Figure 8 likewise has a conveying means 24 which is designed as a clamp-type transporter 32, in the same way as that of Figure 7. The apparatus 22 is also provided with a labeling device 40. The latter has a bearing arrangement 42 for receiving a supply roll 44 of a partially transparent strip 46. The strip 46 is guided, around deflecting rollers 48 and a tensioning roller 50, to an application wheel 52 of an application device 54. The application wheel 52, which is driven in rotation in the feed direction Z, has rams 56 which are distributed in the circumferential direction and can be retracted and extended in the radial direction. The rams 56 are prestressed outwards in the radial direction by means of springs 58 and, in one region of the circumferential path, are retained, for example by a guide means, counter to the spring force in a rest position, in which they are located in the inside in a radial direction. Each of the rams 56 is provided, on its radially outer side, with holes which, in dependence on the rotary position of the application wheel 52, are connected to a negative-pressure source (not shown). On the side which is located opposite the application wheel 52, in relation to the movement path of the printed products 10, the application device 54 has a freely rotatably mounted supporting wheel 60.

Furthermore, the labeling device 40 has a cutting wheel 62, which is of star-like design and whose cutting elements 64, which run parallel to the axis of rotation, are intended for interacting with mating surfaces 66 of the application wheel 52 between the rams 56.

Furthermore, provided between the bearing arrangement 42 and the application wheel 52 is an adhesive-application device 68, which is intended for applying adhesive to the radially outer side of the strip 46, as seen in relation to the application wheel 52.

The labeling device 40 is driven synchronously with respect to the conveying means 24 and is intended for providing each printed product 10, in the exposed border region 38, with a section 70 of the partially transparent strip 46, said section 70 forming a label 70'. This section 70 forms a text panel 12, which serves as a contrast panel 14. In order to provide text on the contrast panel 14, the apparatus has either a printing station 72, which is assigned to the labeling device 40, or a printing station 72', which is assigned to the conveying means 24. The printing station 72 is arranged between the bearing arrangement 42 and, the application wheel 52 and is intended for applying text 18 to that side of the partially transparent strip 46 which is directed towards the application wheel 52. The printing station 72', which is arranged downstream of the application wheel 52, as seen in the conveying direction F, is intended, in the same way as the second printing station 30 of the apparatuses according to Figures 6 and 7, for printing the text 18 onto the contrast panel 14, which is

formed by in each case one section 70 and is adhesively bonded to the relevant printed product 10. A guide 74, which is designed as a guide plate or guide bars, serves for stabilizing printed products 10 in the border region 38 while the text 18 is being printed on.

The labeling device 40 operates as follows. The strip, which rests against the application wheel 52 over part of the circumference of the latter is retained in that the relevant rams 56 are connected to the negative-pressure source. The strip 46 is drawn off from the supply roll 44 by virtue of the application wheel 52 being rotated in the feeder direction Z. Immediately before the strip 46 runs onto the application wheel 52, as seen in the feed direction Z, the relevant ram 56 is displaced into the radially inner, rest position and is then connected to the negative-pressure source. The cutting wheel 62 severs a section 70 from the strip 46 using in each case one cutting element 64, which interacts with the relevant mating surface 66. This section is retained by the relevant ram 56, which continues to be connected to the negative-pressure source. As soon as this ram 56 has left the region of the cutting wheel 62, the spring 58 displaces it, towards the outside in the radial direction, into the application position, as a result of which, as rotation continues, the section 70 which is retained by said ram, and has previously been provided with adhesive on the adhesive-application device 68, is applied to the border region 38 of the relevant printed product 10, and pressed thereon, by the ram. In the process, the openings in the ram 56 have air admitted to them, with the result that the section 70 is released. In this case, the supporting wheel 60 prevents the printed products 10 from being able to yield to the force of the rams 56.

Particularly suitable printing stations 28, 30, 72, 72' are those which use ink jet printing.

The method according to the invention may also be used to provide text on printed products which have surfaces which are barely suitable, if at all, for having text applied to them.

The contrast-panel-forming, self-adhesive, partially transparent labels may also be drawn off from a carrier strip and applied to the printed products.

The labels may be provided with an adhesive which makes it possible for them to be detached from the printed product.

Patent Claims

1. A method of providing text on printed products, in the case of which the printed products (10) are provided with information (18') in a text panel (12), wherein there is applied to the printed surface (10'') of the printed products (10) a contrast panel (14), which forms the text panel (12) and forms a contrast with respect to the information (18') which is to be applied.
2. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein a partially transparent contrast panel (14) is applied.
3. The method as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the contrast panel (14) is printed onto the printed product (10) at a printing station (28), and the information (18') is then printed onto the contrast panel (14), preferably at a further printing station (30).
4. The method as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the characters (20) which form the information (18') are left blank as the contrast panel (14) is produced on the printed product (10).
5. The method as claimed in claim 2, wherein a partially transparent label (70') is adhesively bonded to the printed product (10) in order to form the contrast panel (14).
6. The method as claimed in claim 5, wherein a section (70) is severed from a partially transparent strip (46) and adhesively bonded to the printed product (10), thus forming the label (70').
7. The method as claimed in claim 5 or 6, wherein the information (18') is printed onto the label (70'), the strip (46) or the section (70), at a printing station (72), before the section (70) or the label (70') is adhesively bonded to the printed product (10).
8. The method as claimed in claim 5 or 6, wherein the label (70') or the section (70) is provided with the information (18') after it has been adhesively bonded to the printed product (10).
9. The method as claimed in one of claims 1 to 8, wherein the printed products (10), retained by clamps (36) which are arranged one behind the other in a conveying direction (F), are conveyed continuously such that they overlap one another in an imbricated manner, and the contrast panel (14) is applied in a border region (38) of the printed products (10) which is exposed by the imbricated overlap.
10. An apparatus for implementing the method as claimed in claim 3, having a conveying means (24) which is driven continuously in the conveying direction (F) and is intended for transporting the printed products (10), having a first printing station (28), which is intended for printing the contrast panel (14) onto printed products (10) which are transported past it,

and having a second printing station (30), which is arranged downstream of the first printing station (28) in the conveying direction (F) and is intended for printing the information (18') onto the contrast panel (14).

11. An apparatus for implementing the method as claimed in claim 7 or 8, having a conveying means (24) which is driven continuously in the conveying direction (F) and is intended for transporting the printed products (10), having a labeling device (40), which has a bearing arrangement (42) for receiving a supply roll (44) of a partially transparent strip (46), as well as a cutting element (64) for severing from the strip (46) in each case one section (70), which forms a label (70'), and also has an application device (54) for applying in each case one section (70) onto the printed product (10) which is transported past it, and having a printing station (72; 72') which is intended for printing information (18') onto the strip (46) or the section (70).

12. The apparatus as claimed in claim 10 or 11, wherein the conveying means (24) has clamps (36), which are spaced apart one behind the other in the conveying direction (F) and are intended for the printed products (10).

Abstract

A contrast panel (14), which forms a text panel (12), is applied to the printed products (10). The text panel (12) is then provided with the text (18). The text panel forms a contrast with respect to the text (18), with the result that the latter can be immediately seen and read easily.

(Figure 1)

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